



المفوضية العليا المستقلة للانتخابات
كۆمىسيونى بالاي سه ربه خوي هه لىبژارد نه كان
The Independent Electoral Commission

PROCEDURES FOR GEO COUNT CENTRES

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) is an independent, neutral, governmental and professional institution. It is supervised by the Council of Representatives.

IHEC performs its works according to article no. 102 of the Iraqi Constitution in terms of Law no. 11 of 2007. The IHEC has all the authorities relevant to electoral events, including organising elections, ensuring fair and transparent implementation of elections, and publishing and implementing all electoral regulations and procedures.

The Iraqi Council of Representatives issued the Election Law on Governorate, District & Sub-district Councils no. 36 for 2008. This represents the legal framework according to an open list system that will regulate the Governorate Council Elections for governorates which are not affiliated to regions.

Iraq is divided into several electoral districts based on governorates; each governorate represents one electoral district. Consequently, IHEC registered political entities and certified their candidates' lists for the fourteen electoral districts. There will be a specific ballot for each of the fourteen governorates where elections will take place (which does not include the governorates of the Kurdistan region and Kirkuk).

Article 52 of the Governorate Council Election Law also allocates component reserved seats (for minorities) in the governorates of Baghdad, Ninewa and Basra.

In order to broaden opportunities for the participation of all eligible Iraqis in the voting process, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), special absentee polling stations will be established for IDPs who registered to vote absentee during the Voter Registration Update period. These polling stations will be established in polling centres in the locations where the IDP absentee voters currently reside (including Kurdistan and Kirkuk), so that they can cast a ballot for the candidates of their choice and of the governorate from which they have been displaced.

Additionally special voting facilities will be established for certain categories of voters who are unable to cast a ballot in regular polling stations on Election Day. These include Iraqi security forces, detainees of detention facilities, hospital patients, employees of Iraqi detention centres and hospitals who are working on Election Day, and employees of governmental institutions located in the International Zone in Baghdad who are not registered in the International Zone.

Governorate Council elections will be conducted on 31 January 2009 for regular and absentee voters, and also for special voting for employees and residents of the International Zone. Special voting for all other agreed categories will take place on 28 January.

While regular ballots will be counted in polling stations on 31 January, ballots for absentee and special voters will be sorted and counted at GEO Count Centres. The Count Centres will be operational from 28 January 2009 until completion of counting processes. They will be open daily from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm.

KEY POINTS ON POLLING AND COUNTING

1. Polling Centre and Polling Station Structure

- For the purposes of conducting Governorate Council elections, the IHEC has established polling centres throughout Iraq. Each centre consists of one or more polling stations, each of which is expected to serve up to approximately 400 voters. Governorates will include facilities for regular, absentee and special voting.
- There will be a unique number for each polling centre and for each station (1, 2, 3 etc). This number will be recorded as the polling station number in all polling and counting forms and on all ballot boxes and other sensitive materials for that station. Absentee polling stations will be indicated by an additional letter to the station number (1/غ, 2/غ, 3/غ etc), as will special voting polling stations (1/خ, 2/-خ, 3/-خ etc)¹.
- Only absentee polling centres will be open in the Kurdistan region, and only absentee and special voting polling centres will be open in Kirkuk.

2. Regular Polling and Counting

- In regular polling stations, each station will have its own voter list. Families will be listed in alphabetical order according to the name of the head of family. Each voter who wishes to vote will sign the voter list prior to casting a ballot. If a voter is not listed on the voter list, s/he will not be able to cast a ballot in that polling station.
- Regular polling stations will issue only ballots of the governorate in which the polling station is located.
- Counting of regular polling stations will take place in the station following close of polls. Polling staff will complete all reconciliation and counting processes, and complete Form 141 (Polling Station Reconciliation Form), Form 142 (Total Votes for Political Entities) and Form 143 (Total Votes for Candidates), which will then be transported to the IHEC Tally Centre in Baghdad for data entry and compilation of results.
- If, during reconciliation processes, the ballots cannot be reconciled within the agreed tolerance level, then counting processes in the polling station will cease, and the ballot box and all sensitive materials will be transferred through the GEO warehouse to the Count Centre for audit, following which decision will be made as to whether ballots will be counted and votes included in the results or not.

3. Absentee Polling and Counting

- Polling processes for absentee voting will follow the basic principles of regular polling, except that counting processes will take place in the GEO Count Centre.
- As in regular polling stations, each absentee station will have a voter list, listing families in alphabetical order by head of family and divided according to the governorates for which voters will cast their ballots. A voter must be listed on the voter in order to cast a ballot in that polling station. Each voter will sign the voter list prior to casting a ballot.

¹ In Arabic, the first letters of the word for absentee (transcribed as ghyabi) and special voting (khāss)

- Absentee voters will, however, cast a ballot for the governorate from which they have been displaced, instead of the governorate where they are resident and casting their ballot. Ballot boxes may therefore contain ballots of different governorates.
- After close of polls, the ballot box will be sealed and partial reconciliation will take place, using Form 141A (Polling Station Reconciliation Form – Absentee and Special Voting). The ballot box and all sensitive materials will then be transported through the GEO warehouse to the Count Centre. At the Count Centre, the ballot box will be opened and reconciliation completed by polling station using Form 150A. If reconciliation reveals a discrepancy outside the agreed tolerance level (4%), the ballot boxes will be audited.
- Absentee ballots will not be counted by station, but will be mixed with special voting ballots into batches of governorate ballots for counting.

4. Special Voting Polling and Counting

- In special voting polling stations for the agreed categories of voters, each polling station will have a blank polling station voter list. The voter list is filled in on polling day according to the documentation presented by the voter. Each voter signs the voter list prior to casting a ballot.
- Special voters will cast a ballot according to the governorate of residence (where they are listed on the voter register). Ballot boxes might contain ballots for different governorates.
- Because the voter list is blank and created during the polling process, special voters will cast what is known as a 'conditional ballot'. This means that the ballot is cast at the time of polling, and then the voter's details are checked afterwards in the Count Centre in the voter register database before counting. If the voter is proven to be eligible according to the voter register in the governorate for which s/he cast a ballot, then the vote will be counted. If the voter is not eligible, the conditional ballot envelope and ballot will be rejected.
- In order to ensure secrecy of the vote, inside the conditional ballot envelope, the ballot will be sealed into a secrecy envelope. This contains no information on the voter. Once eligibility is verified, the secrecy envelope will be removed from the conditional ballot envelope prior to the start of counting processes, so the ballot itself remains confidential.
- After close of polling, ballot box top slots will be sealed and partial reconciliation will take place using Form 141/A for absentee and special polling stations. Ballot boxes and all sensitive materials will then be transferred to the GEO Count Centre where the ballot boxes will be opened and reconciliation completed using Form 150 followed by verification of voters' eligibility from conditional ballot envelopes. If reconciliation reveals a discrepancy outside the agreed tolerance level (4%), the polling station materials will be audited.
- Special voting ballots will not be counted in the polling station, but in the GEO Count Centre. They will be mixed and batched with absentee ballots for counting by governorate, as outlined above.

COUNT CENTRE PROCEDURES

1. COUNT CENTRES

The IHEC will establish a Count Centre in each governorate for the purpose of sorting and counting absentee and special voting ballots. It will also process ballots from regular stations requiring audit (because reconciliation revealed a discrepancy outside the 4% tolerance level, or because an investigation is requested due to complaints). In the three governorates of the Kurdistan Region, Count Centres will process absentee ballots only. In Kirkuk, Count Centres will process only ballots from absentee and special polling stations.

The District Election Office will deliver the materials below.

- Ballots for special voting will be delivered directly to the Count Centre.
- Ballots for absentee voting will be delivered first to the GEO warehouse and after that to the Count Centre.
- Ballots for regular stations will be delivered first to the GEO warehouse and after that to the Count Centre.

Following completion of counting processes at the Count Centre, the Results Forms will be transported to the Tally Centre in the IHEC National Office in Baghdad. All materials from the Count Centre, including all counted ballots, will be transferred and stored at the GEO warehouses.

The Count Centre will be open daily from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm (and after 5:00pm as necessary for intake 28 and 31 January). Staff must arrive by 8:00 am so the Count Centre is fully operational by 9:00 am. The Count Centre will be closed on 31 January, Election Day, and will reopen on the morning of 01 February.

The following outlines the planned processing schedule at the Count Centre, indicating start dates for each processing area to be undertaken until completion:

Intake special voting	28 Jan (evening) – 29 Jan	
Reconciliation special voting	29 Jan	
Verification special voting	29 Jan (target date for completion 03 Feb)	Verification of a polling station may take place after reconciliation of that station
Intake absentee Intake regular requiring audit	01 Jan	After intake at the GEO warehouse on 31 Jan (evening) – 01 Feb
Reconciliation absentee	01 Feb	This will ONLY start after completion of reconciliation for all special voting polling stations
Batching (special voting and absentee)	04 Feb	To commence on the instruction of the National Office
Counting (all)	04 Feb	
Audit (all)	29 Jan	Audit and reconciliation can be completed on an ongoing basis. Count of audited stations will not take place until 04 Feb

2. PEOPLE AUTHORISED TO ENTER THE COUNT CENTRE

Only the following categories of people may be present in the Count Centre :

- Count Centre officials
- Authorised members of the IHEC
- Accredited political entity agents
- Accredited observers
- Accredited media representatives (without equipment, except in those cases where it is permitted by the IHEC for particular reasons)
- Members of the security forces ONLY if their presence is needed.

All of the above must wear a badge or armband issued by the IHEC, except security personnel.



Note: No one is authorised to carry weapons inside the Count Centre, except for security personnel on duty, responsible for security of the Count Centre, if required.

2.1 Count Centre Officials

All Count Centre staff are members of the IHEC and must remember to behave neutrally at all times. All staff must sign and adhere to the IHEC Code of Conduct.

Count Centre staff will work from special voting polling day, 28 January 2009, until completion of ballot counting and materials processing. Count Centre staff must also attend training and be available for Count Centre set up activities.

Count Centre activities will be undertaken by teams of Count Centre Officials in each processing area. The number of teams for each area will depend on the number of polling stations or batches to be processed.

During Count Centre operations, different processes will start and finish at different times. Staff responsible for processes which have not yet started or are completed will assist with other processes which are ongoing.

Chain of Command

Each Count Centre will be managed by a Count Centre Manager, who manages all Count Centre processes and staff, with the assistance of a Deputy Manager. The Count Centre Manager will focus in particular on the technical supervision of Count Centre processes, while the Deputy Manager will be mainly responsible for operational and administrative matters (logistics, procurement, security, contracting, staff payment).

Additionally, there will be a supervisor for each processing area, who will assist the Count Manager by supervising the team(s) of staff for the respective area, and ensure that procedures are correctly followed. The Storage and Archive Supervisor will have overall responsibility for all materials handling areas (storage, archive and intake), coordinating with the relevant supervisors.

- Count Centre Officials, in their processing teams, report to their area supervisor.
- The Intake Supervisor reports to the Storage and Archive Supervisor who in turn reports to the Count Centre Manager or Deputy Manager.
- All other area supervisors report to the Count Centre Manager or Deputy Manager directly.
- The Count Centre Manager reports to the GEO Manager, who in turn reports to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), who is the chief executive officer of the IHEC.

Count Centre officials will consist of

Count Centre Management

- i) Count Centre Manager (technical manager)
- ii) Deputy Count Centre Manager (operational manager)

Materials Management (alternative handling)

- iii) Storage and Archive Supervisor and Officers
- iv) Intake Supervisor and Officers

Processing Areas

- v) Reconciliation Supervisor and Officers
- vi) Verification Supervisor and Officers
- vii) Count Supervisor and Officers
- viii) Batch Supervisor and Officers
- ix) Audit Supervisor and Officers

External Relations

- x) Visitors Focal Point

i) Count Centre Manager

The Count Centre Manager is responsible for overall management of the Count Centre and its staff. Duties of the Count Centre Manager include;

- Managing the preparations and set up of the Count Centre, in cooperation with the GEO (identification and selection of the Count Centre venue, Count Centre budget, equipment, staff selection, contracting and training);
- Managing the day to day running of Count Centre facility and its operations;
- Understanding the technical aspects of Count Centre procedures;
- Supervising all staff and activities in the Count Centre to ensure that correct procedures are followed;
- Organising and following up on all security arrangements;
- Ensuring the recording of the presence of observers, media representatives and political entity agents;
- Recording in the Count Centre journal concerns voiced by observers, media representatives and political entity agents, daily statistics and any incidents that occur in the Count Centre;
- Resolving any problems that appear in the Count Centre and which need a resolution. Seeking advice/assistance from the GEO Manager when needed;
- Preparing statistical and any other reports relating to Count Centre operations, and reporting to the GEO;
- Reporting on audits requested by the GEO on behalf of the National Office;
- Supervising the packing of results forms for transfer to the Tally Centre at the National Office;

- Supervising the transfer of counted/packed ballots to the GEO Warehouse;
- Supervising the decommissioning of the Count Centre;
- Supervising the complaints submission process taking place in the Count Centre;
- Organising lunch break and prayer time for the staff while maintaining continuity.

ii) Deputy Count Centre Manager

The Deputy Count Centre Manager assists the Count Centre Manager in management of the Count Centre. Duties of the Deputy Count Manager include:

- Undertaking the duties of the Count Centre Manager as necessary.
- Taking key responsibility for Count Centre operational matters, including material transfer, Count Centre set up, logistics, supply and security arrangements.
- Taking key responsibility for Count Centre administrative matters, including staff selection and contracting, attendance sheets, staff payments, Count Centre budget preparation and reporting and procurement.

iii) Storage and Archive Supervisor and Team

Under the supervision of the Storage and Archive Supervisor, the Storage and Archive Team will undertake all Count Centre storage and archive activities.,

Storage Officers are responsible for:

- Storing materials for all polling stations and batches processed at the Count Centre (including temporary and final storage) and maintenance of the storage area.
- Unloading all materials received at the Count Centre, and final loading for material transportation.
- Transferring materials from one process area within the Count Centre to another.

Archive Officers are responsible for:

- Correct archiving of all forms for all polling stations and batches in the Count Centre, and maintenance of the archive
- Preparing relevant Results Forms for transportation to the Tally Centre at the National Office in Baghdad.

iv) Intake Supervisor and Teams

Intake Teams receive and account for all polling station materials delivered to the Count Centre.

Each Intake Team consists of two intake Officers.

v) Reconciliation Supervisor and Teams

Reconciliation Teams undertake all processes for reconciliation of conditional ballot envelopes for special voting polling stations and reconciliation of ballots for absentee polling stations.

Each Reconciliation Team consists of five staff, one Reconciliation Table Supervisor and four Reconciliation Officers.

vi) Verification Supervisor and Teams

Verification Teams undertake all processes for verification of special voting conditional ballot envelopes against the voter register.

Each Verification Team consists of four staff, one Verification Table Supervisor and three Verification Officers.

vii) Batch Supervisor and Teams

Batch Teams undertake all activities for preparation of batches of absentee and special voting ballots in preparation for counting.

The Batch Supervisor will additionally prepare batch preparation reports for the Count Centre Manager.

Each Count Centre will have one Batch Team consisting of four staff, one Batch Supervisor and four Batch Officers.

viii) Count Supervisor and Teams

Count Teams will undertake all processes for sorting and counting ballots, and completion of Results Forms for each batch of absentee and special voting ballots, and for any regular polling stations requiring count of ballots.

Batch Count Teams consist of up to nine staff, one Batch Count Table Supervisor and eight Count Officers. Teams will consist of five, seven or nine depending on the number of ballots to be counted.

ix) Audit Supervisor and Teams

Audit Teams are responsible for auditing of materials for polling stations requiring investigation (regular, special voting and absentee), and for preparation of audit reports.

Each Audit Team consists of two Audit Officers. They may be assisted by other staff in the counting of ballots if required.

x) Visitors Focal Point(s)

The Visitors Focal Point is an IHEC GEO representative responsible for briefing and guiding visitors to the Count Centre, including observers, political entity agents and media representatives. Duties include:

- Receiving all visitors to the Count Centre and logging their details in the Count Centre journal;
- Providing information to visitors on counting processes;
- Guiding visitors while in the Count Centre, and facilitating appropriate access to processing areas;
- Referring concerns and complaints to the Count Centre Manager or Deputy Manager;
- Developing a schedule to rotate access for visitors if required.

2.2 Accredited Observers, Political Entity Agents and Media Representatives

- At each Count Centre there will be an IHEC GEO staff member to act as Visitors Focal Point, responsible for briefing and guiding visitors (observers, political entity agents and media representatives) while they are at the Count Centre.
- Electoral observers, political entity agents and media representatives play an important role in helping to ensure the integrity of counting processes.
- They are accredited by the IHEC, and issued with accreditation badges. They must wear their accreditation badges at all times, and present this along with a photo ID document to Visitors Focal Point.
- They must introduce themselves to the Visitors Focal Point at the Count Centre.
- They must sign and abide by the relevant code of conduct adopted by the IHEC.
- The Visitors Focal Point will establish a schedule to rotate agents and observers in order to ensure that the conduct of Count Centre operations is not disrupted.

All observers, political entity agents and media representatives should sign in the Count Centre journal, by their name, in a table as outlined below:

No.	Name	Organisation	Accreditation Badge Number	Time of Arrival	Time of Departure	Signature

Observers

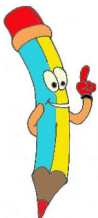
- Observers may enter the Count Centre from the start of operations, from the delivery of special voting polling materials on 28 January 2009, and may be present in the Count Centre during all Count Centre operating hours. Information thereon will be available with the GEO Media Unit.
- No more than two observers for each accredited observer organisation may be present in the Count Centre at any one time.
- Observers may observe all processes in the Count Centre, including intake, reconciliation, verification of conditional ballots, storage, batching, audit and counting processes, but they may not see or take notes of the voter list or conditional ballot envelopes because they contain voter personal data.
- They may take notes of any observations in their own notebooks. They may raise concerns with the Visitors Focal Point or Count Centre Manager or Count Centre Deputy Manager only, and may not communicate with any other Count Centre Staff.
- Observers cannot file an official complaint. They may raise any concerns in public reports to the organisation they represent.
- Observers may follow a vehicle carrying polling materials from the GEO Warehouse to the GEO Count Centre, and from the Count Centre to the Tally Centre at the National Office in Baghdad. They may not travel in an IHEC vehicle.



Electoral observers may raise any concerns with the Visitors Focal Point or Count Centre Manager or Count Centre Deputy Manager. They cannot file a formal complaint or insist on any IHEC staff member taking any particular action according to the IHEC Regulation on Observation No. 3 2008. However, the Visitors Focal Point, Count Centre Manager or Deputy Manager will record any concerns raised by observers in the Count Centre journal and, where possible, resolve the issues raised.

Political Entity Agents

- Political entities may appoint agents to be present in the Count Centre.
- Agents may enter the Count Centre from the start of operations, from the delivery of special voting polling materials on 28 January 2009, and may be present in the Count Centre during all Count Centre operating hours. Information thereon will be available with the GEO Media Unit.
- No more than two agents per accredited political entity may be present in the Count Centre at any one time.
- Agents may observe all processes in the Count Centre, including intake, reconciliation, verification of conditional ballots, storage, batching, audit and counting processes, but they may not see or take notes of the voter list or conditional ballot envelopes because they contain voter personal data
- They may take notes of any observations in their own notebooks. They may raise concerns with the Visitors Focal Point or Count Centre Manager or Count Centre Deputy Manager only, and may not communicate with any other Count Centre staff.
- Political entity agents have the right to submit a complaint to the IHEC by completing a Complaint Form 110. The Complaint may be submitted to the Count Centre, the GEO or the IHEC National Office in Baghdad.
- Political entity agents have the right to object to decisions of the Count Centre Manager according to the IHEC Regulation on Political Entities No. 5 2008. The Count Centre Manager is not obliged to act upon this objection.
- Agents may follow a vehicle carrying polling materials from the GEO Warehouse to the GEO Count Centre, and from the Count Centre to the Tally Centre at the National Office in Baghdad. They may not travel in an IHEC vehicle.



If any observer, agent or media representative conducts her/himself inappropriately, the Visitors Focal Point or Count Centre Manager or Deputy Manager must warn him/her to behave in accordance with the relevant code of conduct. If the misconduct continues, the Count Centre Manager or Deputy Manager may ask the observer, agent or media representative to leave the Count Centre, and will record the incident in the Count Centre journal.

Media Representatives

- Media has an important role in covering the processes taking place in the GEO Count Centre, and thereby promoting the transparency of electoral processes.
- They are prohibited from disrupting processes inside the Count Centre.
- No interviews are allowed inside the Count Centre processing areas. Interviews may take place outside the Count Centre, or in a designated area, with agreed IHEC staff according to IHEC media guidelines.
- They are prohibited from recording and/or filming in the Count Centre.
- They are not allowed to bring into the Count Centre any electronic equipment (cameras, recording devices) except at specific times with prior approval of the IHEC.

2.3 Security Personnel

Iraqi Security Forces are responsible for the security at the Count Centre. Count Centre security personnel should station themselves outside the Count Centre, unless their presence is needed in an emergency or is requested by the Count Centre Manager or his/her Deputy.

The GEO, Count Centre Manager and his/her Deputy must ensure they have all necessary contact numbers for the security forces, in case of emergency.

3. BEFORE THE START OF COUNT CENTRE OPERATIONS

3.1 Preparation of the Count Centre

- All Count Centre staff are expected to be present for the training sessions organised at the Count Centre, and the Count Centre Manager, Deputy Manager and all staff must be available to prepare the Count Centre and all materials required for operations at times agreed with the Count Centre Manager.
- The Count Centre must be prepared in a way to ensure efficient and secure delivery of materials.
- A sign identifying the site as the IHEC GEO Count Centre will be put in place.
- Observer organisations, media representatives and political entity agents will be notified by the GEO as to where the GEO Count Centre is located. In addition relevant information will be displayed at the GEO.

3.2 Start of Count Centre Operations

Count Centre operations will commence before 31 January Election Day, with the delivery of sensitive materials from special voting polling stations to all Count Centres except those in the Kurdistan region. This will happen in the evening hours of special voting polling day on 28 January 2009 or in the morning of 29 January.

4. COUNT CENTRE PROCESSES STEP-BY-STEP

The Count Centre operation will consist of the following processes:

- Intake** Intake at the GEO Count Centre is the process of receiving and verifying all election materials used at polling stations.
- Reconciliation** Reconciliation is the process of verifying polling processes through accounting checks. For this election there are two main reconciliation processes: checking total ballots cast against signatures on the voter list, and checking total ballots accounted for (used and unused) against ballots received.
- Verification** Verification of conditional ballot envelopes is the process by which the voter's details, as written on the envelope, are checked in the voter register database to verify that the voter is on the voter list and eligible to cast a ballot for the correct governorate. If the voter is found on the voter list for the correct governorate, her/his ballot will be counted. Additionally, the process facilitates detection of possible multiple voting.
- Batching** Reconciled and verified materials will then be batched. Special voting and absentee ballots are not counted by polling station, but by governorate batch in the Count Centre. Each batch will therefore have ballots for one governorate only, but these will come from a mixture of different absentee and special voting polling stations.
- Count** Ballots will then be sorted and counted using the same procedures which were applied for counting in polling stations. Valid votes will be sorted and counted for political entities and candidates, and these will then be recorded in reconciliation and results forms. Special voting and absentee ballots will be counted by governorate batch. Ballots from audited regular stations which need to be counted will be counted by polling station.

Following this, Reconciliation and Results Forms will be transferred to the Tally Centre in Baghdad for compilation of results.

The above processes are supported by a storage and archive area, to transfer and store materials and forms in an organized manner for each polling station.

COUNT CENTRE MATERIALS

Sensitive and non-sensitive materials

There are two types of materials: sensitive and non-sensitive.

Sensitive materials are materials which may be used for fraudulent purposes and must be kept secure at all times. Those materials are ballots, conditional ballot envelopes, voter lists, official ballot stamps, forms and the station journal.

Non-sensitive materials (eg voter screens, stationery etc) will not be received at the GEO Count Centre. They will be delivered to and stored at the GEO warehouse.

Count Centre Coloured Tape

In the Count Centre, the status of sensitive material is indicated by coloured tape.

- Red tape represents a problem (an irregularity flagged at intake, either in the Count Centre or the GEO Warehouse, material for which an audit was requested, regular sensitive materials for which the count was stopped in the polling station).
- Blue tape is specific for special voting materials and indicates that it has been reconciled.
- Green tape indicates that material is ready to be batched.
- Yellow tape indicates the batch was counted.

Forms

Count Centre forms used for Count Centre processes (Forms 150, 150/A, 151, 152 and 153) do not have carbon copies. If a copy is required, then a photocopy will be made and countersigned by the Team Supervisor.

If a mistake is made on a form, a new one will be completed at the end of the process to ensure all information is recorded legibly and correctly.

At the end of each process, one copy of the form will be given to the archive and the original will stay with the materials. At the end of the count process, forms 151, 152 and 153 (or 141, 142 and 143) will be placed in an A3 tamper evident bag for final delivery to the Tally Centre.

Forms to be used in the Count Centre

	Form	Purpose
1	Form 148	GEO Warehouse Intake Form
2	Form 148/A	Absentee Materials Intake Form
3	Form 149	Count Centre Intake Form
4	Form 150	Count Centre Special Voting Reconciliation and Verification Form
5	Form 150/A	Count Centre Absentee Voting Reconciliation Form
6	Form 151	Count Centre Batching and Counting Form
7	Form 152	Total Votes for Political Entities
8	Form 153	Total Votes for Candidates
9	Form 110	Complaint Form

Polling Station Forms which may be used for materials received at the Count Centre

	Form	Purpose
1	Form 141/A	Polling Station Reconciliation Form – Absentee and Special Voting
2	Form 141	Polling Station Reconciliation Form
3	Form 142	Total Votes for Political Entities
4	Form 143	Total Votes for Candidates

Material Handover Forms

	Form	Purpose
1	Form 162/A	Material Handover from Polling Centre to Station and Retrieval – Absentee
2	Form 164	Material Handover from GEO Warehouse

SECTION 1

INTAKE

1.1 What is intake?

Intake at the GEO Count Centre consists of receiving and verifying all election materials used at polling stations and polling centres.

1.2 When does intake take place?

There will be two main periods of intake at the Count Centres.

1. Special Voting polling stations: 28 – 29 January 2009

Materials from special voting polling stations and centres will be received at the GEO Count Centre before Election Day, following close of polls on special voting polling day at the end of 28 January 2009, possibly continuing into 29 January.

Note: There will be no intake of special voting materials in the Count Centres of the governorates of the Kurdistan region.

2. Regular and Absentee polling stations: 31 January – 01 February 2009

Materials from absentee polling stations and regular stations with a discrepancy outside the tolerance level (4%) will be delivered first to the GEO warehouse following close of polls on Election Day, at the end of 31 January 2009 and possibly continuing into 01 February. After this, the following will be delivered to the Count Centre as soon as possible, starting at a time to be confirmed by the GEO warehouse:

- Sensitive materials from all absentee polling stations
- Sensitive materials from regular polling stations requiring audit, which were not counted because of a discrepancy at reconciliation outside the tolerance level, or because an irregularity was identified at intake at the GEO warehouse.

Note: For the three governorates of Kurdistan and Kirkuk, materials from absentee polling stations will be delivered directly to the Count Centre. There will be no regular polling station materials.

3. Regular polling stations with counted ballots: after 01 February

Additionally, after these two periods of intake, there may be additional regular polling stations requiring audit, following an instruction based on complaints. These will be delivered to the Count Centre as required, following notification of the Count Centre.

1.3 Intake Staff

Intake will be performed by Intake Teams consisting of two Intake Officers, under the supervision of the Intake Supervisor. The number of teams will depend on the number of polling stations to be received.

Storage Officers will assist the Intake Officers by moving materials to and from the intake area, in line with the instructions given by the Intake Area Supervisor.

1.4 Preparation for Intake

The Count Centre must be prepared to receive polling station materials. The Count Centre will be notified when materials are on the way.

Sufficient space should be prepared within the intake area to ensure an orderly process and best use of space available.

The following items are required for intake and should be available in the intake area:

- Red tape to be placed on materials for polling stations requiring audit
- Intake Logbook (for the Intake Supervisor)
- Binders for Intake Forms 149, 148 and 148/A
- Intake Forms 149 (intake of special voting materials only)
- Intake Forms 148 (intake of regular polling materials at the GEO warehouse)
- Intake Forms 148/A (intake of absentee polling materials only). These will be used in the GEO warehouse and in the Count Centres in the governorates of the region of Kurdistan and Kirkuk.
- Empty ballot boxes (or materials boxes) for A3 forms tamper evident bags
- Scissors to for opening A3 forms tamper evident bags
- Pens.

1.5 Materials to be Received at Intake

At the Count Centre the following materials will be received at intake:

1. *From each Special Voting Polling Station*

- One or two ballot boxes filled with special voting conditional ballot envelopes
- One A2 tamper evident bag containing ballot stubs, unused ballots, the envelope of spoiled/discarded ballots, unused secrecy and conditional ballot envelopes
- One A2 tamper evident bag containing the voter list, the polling station journal, the official ballot stamp, unused complaint forms
- One A3 tamper evident bag (labeled National Office) containing the top copy of form 141/A, the form worksheet and the cover
- One A3 tamper evident bag (labeled GEO) containing the middle copy of form 141/A and the A4 Complaints Envelope
- Form 162/A (Material Handover from Polling Centre to Station and Retrieval)

2. *From each Absentee Polling Station*

- One ballot box filled with ballots
- One A2 tamper evident bag containing ballot stubs, unused ballots, the envelope with spoilt and discarded ballots
- One A2 tamper evident bag containing the voter list, the polling station journal, the ballot official stamp, unused complaint forms
- One A3 tamper evident bag (labeled National Office) containing the top copy of form 141/A, the form worksheet and the cover
- Form 148/A Absentee Polling Station Intake Form.

3. *From Regular Polling Stations not yet counted and requiring audit*

- One ballot box filled with ballots
- One A2 tamper evident bag containing ballot stubs, unused ballots, the envelope with spoilt and discarded ballots
- One A2 tamper evident bag containing the voter list, the polling station journal, the official ballot stamp, unused complaint forms
- One A3 tamper evident bag containing the top copy of form 141 (labeled National Office), the form worksheet and the cover
- Form 148 GEO Warehouse Intake Form for regular polling stations.

4. *From Regular Polling Stations already counted but requiring audit (to be received after the initial intake periods)*

- One ballot box containing ballots and two A2 tamper evident bags with other sensitive materials inside
- One A3 tamper evident bag (opened and resealed) containing the middle copy of form 141 (labeled GEO).
- Form 148 GEO Warehouse Intake Form for regular polling stations.

1.6 Intake step-by-step

1. *Arrival of polling station materials*

Polling Station materials should be delivered by the Polling Centre Coordinator or GEO warehouse representative.

Storage Officers will offload the sensitive materials from the transport truck or vehicle. Non-sensitive materials should not be offloaded. These should remain on the truck for transportation to the GEO Warehouse.

Storage Officers will line up polling station sensitive materials for each Intake Team, in order to maintain a continuous flow of materials to the Intake Teams. It is important that materials are lined up at intake by polling centre. Each polling station of a polling centre should be kept up together and processed in sequence.

2. *Intake of polling station sensitive materials*

The Intake Team will receive materials of each polling station for a centre one by one and will verify materials, recording this on the relevant Intake Form. One Intake Officer will handle and visually inspect the ballot boxes and tamper evident bags. The other Intake Officer will verify forms and record findings on the Intake Form.

The Intake Area Supervisor will assist the Intake Teams when needed and will keep track of each polling station processed at intake in the Intake Logbook.

All completed Intake Forms will be archived in a binder, ordered by polling centre and with each polling station in sequence.

If there are sufficient staff, it is suggested that one or two Intake Officers assist the Intake Supervisor in logging all polling stations received at intake. Completed Intake Forms can be given to these Intake Officers for logging in the Intake Logbook and for filing of the Intake Forms in the binders.

A. For special voting materials delivered directly to the Count Centre

The Intake Team will use Form 149 (Count Centre Intake Form).

The intake area will have a box for collection of all A3 forms tamper evident bags (labeled GEO), also containing the Complaints Envelope. These will be transferred to the GEO following intake.

Any non-sensitive items delivered in error will also be put aside for transportation to the GEO warehouse.

For each polling centre, the Intake Team will have a ballot box for collection of A3 forms tamper evident bags labeled for the National Office for all polling stations of that centre. This must be labeled with the polling centre number.

For each polling station, the Intake Team will undertake the following steps.

- Check and record the presence of Form 162/A (Material Handover from Polling Centre to Polling Station and Retrieval).
- Check that seal numbers on ballot box seals match those recorded on Form 162/A.
 - If the seal numbers do not match, note the discrepancy in the Remarks section on Handover Form 162/A and Intake Form 149. Interview the delivering staff member to ascertain any known reason for the discrepancy and record findings in the remarks section on both forms. If the explanation is not acceptable, place red tape around the ballot box(es) and A2 tamper evident bags, indicating that the materials require audit.
- Verify and record the presence of polling station materials, as listed in 1.5:
 - ✓ One or two ballot boxes
 - ✓ One A2 tamper evident bag (containing ballot stubs etc)
 - ✓ One A2 tamper evident bag (containing the voter list etc)
 - ✓ One A3 tamper evident bag (labeled National Office)
 - ✓ One A3 tamper evident bag (labeled GEO).
 - If any visible irregularity is obvious relating to the contents of the ballot box or other sensitive materials, or if any sensitive materials are missing, place red tape around the ballot box and A2 tamper evident bags indicating that the materials require audit. Note the irregularity on Forms 162/A and 149.
- Open the A3 tamper evident bag (labeled National Office) and verify that the top copy of form 141/A is present and fully completed.
 - If form 141/A is not present or not fully completed, open the second A3 tamper evident bag (labeled GEO) to see if Form 141/A is present and fully completed. If the Form 141/A for the GEO is present and complete, this form will replace the copy in the National Office tamper evident bag. If there is no complete Form 141/A, place red tape around the ballot box and A2 tamper evident bags indicating that the materials will be audited. Note the irregularity on Forms 162/A and 149.
- Replace Form 141/A into the tamper evident bag.
- Place the A3 tamper evident bag (labeled GEO) in the intake area box for A3 forms tamper evident bags for the GEO.

- Sign the Handover Form 162/A. Remove the last copy and give it to the delivering staff member. Retain the other copies for archiving at the Count Centre.
- Ensure the delivering staff member signs Intake Form 149, and give him/her a copy.
- If the polling station materials do not require audit, place the A3 forms tamper evident bag (labeled National Office) into the ballot box used to collect all forms tamper evident bags for that polling centre.
- Ensure the Form 149 is placed in the binder (either by the Intake Team or by the additional Intake Officer, as instructed by the Intake Supervisor).
- If the ballot box has red tape around it indicating that the materials require audit, ensure all sensitive materials are marked with red tape and attach the A3 forms tamper evident bag (labeled National Office) to the ballot box.
- Notify the Area Supervisor or designate of that intake for the polling station is completed, according to the instructions of the Area Supervisor, to ensure all polling stations completed at intake are properly logged.
- Proceed with intake of the next polling station for that centre.
- After completion of all polling stations for the centre, place a lid on the ballot box containing the A3 tamper evident bags (labeled National Office) but do not seal it. Ensure the ballot box is labeled with the polling centre and station code.

Note: If any materials delivered to the Count Centre are not labeled with the polling centre and station information (such as ballot boxes or A2 tamper evident bags), if it is possible to identify the polling station to which the materials belong, then label the materials properly. If it is not known to which polling station the materials belong, then place red tape around the ballot boxes and tamper evident bags, to indicate that the materials require audit.

Storage Officers will remove the ballot boxes and tamper evident bags to the storage and archive area.

Following completion of intake of special voting polling materials, the A3 forms tamper evident bags labeled (GEO) and any non-sensitive items delivered in error will be transported to the GEO warehouse.

B. For regular polling stations delivered first to the GEO warehouse and then to the Count Centre

Instead of Form 149 (Count Centre Intake), the Intake Team will use Form 148 (GEO Warehouse Intake), which will be delivered to the Count Centre with the sensitive materials.

Form 162/A will not be received. Instead, materials will be accompanied by a handover form from the GEO warehouse to the Count Centre (Form 164). Seal numbers will instead be checked against Form 148 (GEO Warehouse Intake).

Only one A3 tamper evident bag containing forms completed in the polling station will be present.

All other steps will follow the process described above.

- C. For all absentee polling stations delivered first to the GEO warehouse and then to the Count Centre, or delivered directly to the Count Centre in the Kurdistan region and Kirkuk

Intake Form 148/A will be used. All other steps follow the process described for intake of special voting polling materials.

1.7 Reasons for Quarantine of Polling Station Materials

In addition to materials from regular polling stations requiring audit, where counting was ceased in the polling station because of a discrepancy outside the tolerance level, polling station materials may be set aside for audit during intake for the following reasons:

- There is a discrepancy in seal numbers between seals on the ballot box and those noted on forms
- There is a visible irregularity related to the contents of the ballot box or A2 tamper evident bags
- Sensitive material is missing (for example, A2 tamper evident bag, or unused ballots inside an A2 tamper evident bag)
- Form 141 or 141/A is not present or is not fully completed.

In these cases, red tape will be placed around the ballot box and other sensitive materials for the polling station. The A3 forms tamper evident bag will be taped to the ballot box, and materials will be moved and stored in the Quarantine area of the Count Centre until audit is complete. Any irregularity must be noted on the intake form (and handover form 162/A if present).

SECTION 2

STORAGE AND ARCHIVE

Storage and archive is the process of storing the sensitive materials and forms and it should be done in a way that one can quickly and easily find the materials of a specific polling station.

The storage area will be organized according to the number of ballot boxes, which are expected to be received from special voting, absentee and regular polling stations requiring audit.

The storage teams will be responsible for filing the forms assigned for this process in special files.

The duties of Storage and Archive Staff are:

- Unloading the trucks or vehicles used to deliver sensitive materials to the Count Centre and loading them, for example, to transport the tamper evident bags containing results forms to the Tally Centre at the National Office at Baghdad.
- Lining up and bringing materials for each polling centre to the Intake Teams in the intake area.
- Storing the A3 tamper evident bags by polling centre.
- Bringing materials received at intake to the storage and archive area and storing them according to a determined plan.
- Storing materials temporarily and moving them from one processing area to another, as required.
- Archive in filing cabinets all completed forms from the different processes undertaken in the Count Centre.
- Storing temporarily the A3 tamper evident bag containing Count Centre reconciliation and results forms 151, 152 and 153, and polling station reconciliation and results forms 141, 142 and 143 as necessary, in addition to the counted ballots boxes.

The Storage Area Supervisor

There will be an area supervisor in charge of storage and archive processes. The Storage and Archive Supervisor will be provided with a storage and archive logbook containing a list of all polling centres and stations (including special voting, absentee and regular) in the governorate.

The Supervisor is responsible for:

- Keeping track of materials of all polling stations in the storage and archive area.
- Keeping track of where the materials for each polling station are at each moment in time in the Count Centre (which process area).
- Keeping track of materials to be transferred to the Tally Centre in Baghdad (reconciliation and results forms 151, 152 and 153, and any forms 141, 142 and 143).
- Keeping track of materials to be transferred to the GEO Warehouse.

Storage Methodology

The storage and archive area will consist of four areas:

1. Special voting materials area: there will be one or two ballot boxes for each polling station (with boxes for all stations belonging to one centre placed together), and another ballot box for each polling centre containing all A3 forms tamper evident bag A3 for all polling stations of that centre.
2. Absentee materials area: there will be one ballot box for each polling station (with boxes for stations belonging to one centre placed together), and another ballot box for each polling centre containing all A3 forms tamper evident bag A3 for all polling stations of that centre.
3. Quarantine materials area: this is used for storing all materials with red tape around them, requiring audit, whether they belong to special voting, absentee or regular polling stations.
4. Area for materials ready transportation: audited and counted materials will be removed and placed in this area for ultimate onward transportation.
5. Archive area: this is an area with filing cabinets to archive all forms used during Count Centre processes by polling station.

Storage Step by Step

1. Initial Storage

A. Arrival of SNV Materials.

SNV materials will be delivered before other materials and consequently will be stored first. The Storage Team will:

- Unload the transport vehicles, under the supervision of the Storage and Archive Supervisor.
- Line up materials by polling centre if possible.
- Bring the materials of one polling centre to the Intake Team.

Note: Do not bring materials for more than one polling centre to the Intake Team at the same time. The Storage and Intake Teams should coordinate to ensure a continuous flow of materials to the Intake Team.

- Provide assistance in carrying the ballot boxes within the intake area.
- Remove materials received at intake from the intake area.
- Bring materials received at intake to the record desk in the storage and archive area (intake and reconciliation forms, and ballot boxes).
- The Supervisor accounts for all materials stored by recording numbers of polling centres and stations in the storage and archive logbook.
- Store the ballot boxes according to the prepared storage "plan".
- Archive all forms used during intake in the designated filing cabinets in polling station order.

B. Arrival of Absentee Materials

- The same procedures apply as described in section A above, with the exception that absentee materials are stored separately from special voting materials in the storage plan.

Arrival of Regular Polling Station Materials for audit and/or (re)counting

- Investigations based on complaints, or discrepancies identified in the polling station or during the data entry process in the Tally Centre in Baghdad, may result in the need to audit or recount materials of regular polling stations. These materials will be transferred from the GEO warehouse to the Count Centre and temporarily stored in the quarantine area pending audit. The quarantine area will be separated from areas for absentee and special voting materials according to the storage plan.

Note: make sure that materials from each kind of voting process (regular, absentee and special voting) are stored in its assigned part of the storage area.

2. Assisting in moving materials between process areas

- While intake is still ongoing, polling stations for which intake is completed will undergo reconciliation and verification. Materials of these polling stations will be moved to the reconciliation area.
- Storage Officers will provide assistance, as required, in moving ballot boxes between process areas, and in returning materials back for storage in the storage and archive area.

3. Storage after Counting

- As materials are batched and counted, counted materials will be repacked in ballot boxes representing counted batches.
- It is expected that the number of ballot boxes required will be reduced after the counting process, and consequently less space will be required in the storage and archive area.

4. Packing of Count Centre Reconciliation and Results Forms for transportation to the Tally Centre in Baghdad

The Storage and Archive Supervisor, assisted by other area supervisors, will:

- Ensure Count Centre Forms 151, 152 and 153 for each batch (and any Forms 141, 142 and 143) are packed in an A3 tamper evident bag, labeled with the name and the number of the GEO Count Centre, and the destination (Tally Centre).
- Place these bags in a ballot box, to be kept under supervision, labeled with the name and number of the GEO Count Centre, the destination (Tally Centre) and the number of tamper evident bags inside.
- Seal the ballot box for transportation and record the serial numbers on the relevant handover form.

5. Transfer of counted ballots to the GEO Warehouse

Once all complaints have been processed, audits completed and special voting and absentee materials counted, all sensitive materials will be transferred from the Count Centre to the GEO warehouse, using material handover Form 164.

SECTION 3 RECONCILIATION PROCESSES

Reconciliation processes will be implemented by Reconciliation Teams. Each team will consist of five officials, a Reconciliation Team Supervisor and four Reconciliation Officials, who will work in two pairs of two.

At the Count Centre, two types of reconciliation will be performed:

- A) Reconciliation of special voting conditional ballot envelopes
- B) Reconciliation of absentee ballots.

The reconciliation process includes two important parts, which are:

- 1) To verify whether cast conditional ballot envelopes or absentee ballots match the signatures on the respective polling station voter list (number of signatures + discarded ballots).
- 2) To account for all ballots after polling with the number of ballots received.

Chronologically, every Count Centre will reconcile special voting conditional ballot envelopes before reconciling absentee ballots.

The Reconciliation Supervisor in cooperation with the Storage and Archive Supervisor will ensure that polling stations are reconciled one at a time in sequence.

The following items are required for reconciliation and should be available in the reconciliation area:

- Form 150 for special voting and 150A for absentee reconciliation
- A sufficient number of plastic bags
- Scissors
- Permanent marker (for labeling plastic bags)
- Pens.

I RECONCILIATION OF SPECIAL VOTING CONDITIONAL BALLOT ENVELOPES

With the help of Storage Officers, the ballot boxes and tamper evident bags of a special voting polling station are brought to the table of a Reconciliation Team. Reconciliation takes place using the A3-size Count Centre Reconciliation and Verification Form 150.

1. Before opening the ballot box

A. Checking the information on Reconciliation Form 141/A

- The Reconciliation Team Supervisor checks the number recorded in field 14, which shows the discrepancy between i) total ballots received and ii) the sum of unused + spoiled ballots and the total number of signatures on the voter lists, that is 4-(8+10+12). The result should equal zero (0).
- If the totals in fields 13 and 14 are equal, the required information will be copied from Form 141/A to Form 150.

- If the result differs from zero (0), recount the calculation for the above fields and if there was found a mistake in the addition and subtraction process on the Form 140/A, make the correction on the Form itself.
- If the discrepancy persists and the result does not equal zero (0), recount the following:
 - * Unused ballots
 - * Spoiled ballots
 - * Signatures on the voter lists
 - * Discarded ballots.
- Record the counted totals, correcting Form 141/A if necessary. The Reconciliation Team Supervisor will sign and date next to any correction, to show that the correction is legitimate.
- If either one of the two fields 13 and 14 differs from zero (0), recount field 13 by goernorate. If there is a mistake in the calculation process on Form 141/A, the correction will be recorded on Form 141/A itself.

B. Copying the relevant data from Form 141/A to Form 150

The Team Supervisor copies the following data onto Count Centre Reconciliation and Verification Form 150:

- The total of field 4 (total ballots received) on Form 141/A to field 1 on Form 150;
- The total of field 12 (total signatures) on Form 141/A to field 2 on Form 150;
- The total of field 8 (total unused ballots) on Form 141/A to field 3 on Form 150;
- The total of field 10 (total spoiled ballots) on Form 141/A to field 4 on Form 150;
- The total of field 16 (total discarded ballots) on Form 141/A to field 5 on Form 150.

On Form 150, the Reconciliation Team Supervisor now calculates the total of fields 3+4+5 (unused, spoiled and discarded ballots) into Field 6 which represents total number of ballots outside the ballot box.

2. After Opening the Ballot Box

This process consists of two phases:

- Counting all items containing ballots, and then completing the two reconciliation processes (ballots inside the box against signatures on the voter list, and total ballots inside and outside the box with ballots received)
- Separating out only intact conditional ballot envelopes which will then proceed to the verification process, and disqualifying all other items which will not proceed for verification.

A. Counting the number of ballots in the ballot box

1. The Reconciliation Officers open the ballot box and carefully place the conditional ballot envelopes on the reconciliation table.
2. The Reconciliation Officers sort the ballot box contents into the following categories, as applicable:

- A For both reconciliation and verification
 - Intact conditional ballot envelopes.
- B For reconciliation only
 - Loose ballots
 - Intact secrecy envelopes
- C. Not for reconciliation or verification
 - Open and empty conditional ballot envelopes
 - Open and empty secrecy envelopes.

3. In the next step, and working in pairs, the Reconciliation Officers:

- Double count the intact conditional ballot envelopes and record the total in field 7 of Form 150.
- Double count the total number of loose ballots and intact secrecy envelopes (containing ballots) and record the total in field 8 of Form 150.
- The Reconciliation Team Supervisor calculates the total of fields 7+8 and records the total in field 9 of Form 150, which represents the total number of ballots inside the ballot box.

B. First Reconciliation: Ballots inside the box with number of signatures on the Conditional Voter List.

- Count the fields $(9+5)-2$ and record the difference in field 10 on Form 150. The result should be zero.
 If the result in field 10 does not equal zero or is within the accepted tolerance level, proceed to the next reconciliation stage.

Note: If the result differs from zero and exceeds the level of tolerance (4%), the calculations on Form 150 will be repeated, If the discrepancy persists outside the level of tolerance, the Reconciliation Officers will be instructed to recount the signatures (by governorate), and ballots inside the box (fields 7 and 8). If the discrepancy persists, the supervisor investigates whether the disqualified ballots envelope could resolve the problem. If not, the problem will be registered at the relevant field on Form 150.

C. Second Reconciliation: ballots inside and outside the box with ballots received

On Form 150, the Reconciliation Team Supervisor will record the following:

- Total number of unused, spoiled and discarded ballots, which represents the total number of ballots outside the ballot box, in field 11, as it is recorded in field 6.
- Total number of the ballots inside the ballot box (contents of the box) in the field 12, as it is recorded in field 9.
- Calculate the total of fields 11+12 and record this in field 13 (total number of ballots inside and outside the box).
- Record in field 14 the difference between field 1, number of ballots received and field 13, total number of ballots inside and outside the box, that is fields 1-13 = 14. The result should be zero.

- If the result equals zero or is within the tolerance level (4%), it is possible to proceed to the next process (verification of conditional ballot envelopes).

Note: If the result differs from zero (0) and exceeds the level of tolerance, the calculations on Form 150 will be repeated and recorded it at the relevant field on the Form 150. If the discrepancy persists outside the level of tolerance, the Reconciliation Officers will recount ballots outside the box (unused, spoiled and discarded ballots).



If at this point, the discrepancy persists in either the first reconciliation or the second (or both), the discrepancy exceeds the level of tolerance, the process will be stopped. The materials will be packed and red tape placed around each ballot box and tamper evident bag. Comments will be recorded in the relevant field of Form 150 and the materials will be stored in the quarantine area of the storage and archive area.

D. Disqualify all items which will not proceed to verification

- Disqualify all items which are not intact conditional ballot envelopes (loose ballots, intact secrecy envelopes, open and empty conditional ballot envelopes and open and empty secrecy envelopes) by writing "Disqualified" across them. (In the case of loose ballots with no envelope, the ballot is unfolded, kept face down, and "Disqualified" is written across the back).
- Place all disqualified items in a transparent plastic bag labeled "Disqualified Items", mark it with the name and number of the polling centre and number of the polling station and seal it and place it in the original ballot box of the polling station.

3. Packing and Storage

The Reconciliation Team will sort the conditional ballots envelopes now by governorate, place them in plastic bags and write the followings on the bag:

- i. Number of the special voting polling station.
- ii. Number and name of the polling centre.
- iii. Governorates for which the ballots are cast.
- iv. Number of conditional ballots envelopes inside the bag.

The Reconciliation Team will write their names and sign in the relevant part of 150/A.

The labeled plastic bags with counted and sorted conditional ballot envelopes are placed in the ballot box(es). The form 141/A and a copy of form 150 are provided to the archive. The original Form 150 is placed in the ballot box.

Blue tape is placed on the ballot box(es) and tamper evident bags to indicate that the polling station is ready to undergo verification.

II RECONCILIATION OF ABSENTEE VOTING BALLOTS

With the help of Storage Officers, the ballot box and tamper evident bags of a particular absentee voting polling station are brought to the table of a Reconciliation Team. Reconciliation takes place using the A4-size Count Centre Reconciliation Form for Absentee Voting, Form 150/A.

1. Before opening the ballot box

The procedure is the same as for reconciliation of special voting conditional ballot envelopes. Copy the data from Form 141/A to Form 150/A.

2. After opening the ballot box

A. Count of absentee ballots inside the ballot box

- The Reconciliation Officers open and empty the ballot box on the Reconciliation Table.
- The ballots are unfolded and kept face down during the entire reconciliation process.
- Double the ballots and the Reconciliation Supervisor records the total number of the absentee ballots in field 7 of Form 150/A (total number of the ballots inside the box).

B. First Reconciliation: absentee ballots in the box with the signatures on the voter list

1. Calculate the total of fields 5+7-2. This represents the number of ballots inside the box + the discarded ballots – the number of the signatures on the voter list. Record the difference in field 8 of Form 150/A. The result should be zero (0).
2. If the result is zero or within the accepted tolerance level (4%), proceed to the next reconciliation process.

Note: If the result differs from zero (0) and exceeds the level of tolerance, the calculations on Form 150/A will be repeated. If the discrepancy persists, re-count the signatures by tovernorate and ballots inside the box. If the results still does not equal zero, the Reconciliation Team Supervisor will record the comment in the relevant field of Form 150/A.

C. Second Reconciliation: ballots inside and outside the box with ballots received

On Form 150/A, the Reconciliation Team Supervisor will record the following:

- Total number of unused, spoiled and discarded ballots, which represents the total number of ballots outside the ballot box, in field 9, as it is recorded in field 6.
- Total number of ballots inside the box in field 10, as it is recorded in field 7.
- Calculate the total of fields 9+10 (total number of ballots inside and outside the box) in field 11.
- Total number of ballots received in field 12, as it is recorded in the field 1.
- Calculate the total of fields 11+12, which represents the number of received ballots - total number of ballots inside and outside the box, and record the result in field 13. The result should be zero.

- If the result equals zero or is within the tolerance level (4%), the polling station can proceed to the next process (batching).

Note: If the result differs from zero (0) and exceeds the level of tolerance, the Reconciliation Team Supervisor will repeat the calculations on Form 150/A, and if the discrepancy persists, record this case at the relevant field on the Form. If discrepancy still persists, recount the ballots outside the box (unused, spoiled and discarded),



If at this point, the discrepancy persists in either the first reconciliation or the second (or both), the discrepancy exceeds the level of tolerance, the process will be stopped. The materials will be packed and red tape placed around each ballot box and tamper evident bag. Comments will be recorded in the relevant field of Form 150/A and the materials will be stored in the quarantine area of the storage and archive area.

The Reconciliation Team will sort the absentee ballots now by Governorate and place them in plastic bags and write the followings on the bag:

- i. Number of the absentee polling station.
- ii. Number and name of the polling centre.
- iii. Governorates for which the ballots are cast.
- iv. Number of ballots inside the bag.

Then the Reconciliation Team will write their names and sign in the relevant part of Form 150/A.

3. Packing and Storage

The labeled plastic bags with reconciled absentee ballots are placed in the ballot box(es). The form 141/A and a copy of form 150 are provided to the archive. The original form 150 is placed in the ballot box.

Green tape is placed on the ballot box(es) and tamper evident bags to indicate that the polling station is ready for batching.

SECTION 4

VERIFICATION OF SPECIAL VOTING CONDITIONAL BALLOT ENVELOPES

4.1 What is verification of conditional ballot envelopes?

Verification of conditional ballot envelopes is the process by which the voter's details, as written on the envelope, are checked in the voter register database to verify that the voter is on the voter list and eligible to cast a ballot for the correct governorate. If the voter is found on the voter list for the correct governorate, her/his ballot will be counted. Additionally, the process facilitates detection of possible multiple voting.

4.2 When does verification take place?

Once the reconciliation process is complete for one polling station of a special voting polling centre, the Count Centre may proceed with verification of conditional ballots for that polling station.

4.3 Verification Staff

A Verification Team consists of four staff, one Verification Team Supervisor and three Verification Officers.

Verification staff will have received separate training on data entry of conditional ballot envelope data and use of the verification computer software.

4.4 Preparation for Verification

The following items are required for verification and should be available in the verification area:

- The Forms 150 (Count Centre Special Voting Reconciliation and Verification Form) used during reconciliation for the respective polling stations
- "Rejected" stamp
- A sufficient number of plastic bags
- Stickers or a permanent marker pen for labeling plastic bags
- An empty ballot box (as a spare for temporary storage)
- Pens (for marking Verification Officers to mark conditional ballot envelopes approved or rejected)

5.5 Verification Step by Step

Verification will be done for all special voting polling stations belonging to the same polling centre in sequence.

For each polling station, the same Form 150 (Count Centre Special Voting Reconciliation and Verification Form) will be used as during the reconciliation process. For verification, the second half of the form will be completed by the Verification Team Supervisor for the relevant polling station.

The verification process will check each conditional ballot against the voter register and either accept or reject the envelope for counting processes.

1. Preparatory Steps

The Verification Team Supervisor will

- Take the ballot box and Form 150 for the first polling station of the centre;
- Copy the number recorded in Field 7 of the reconciliation section of Form 150 (total conditional ballot envelopes to be verified) into Field 15 in the verification section;
- Ensure the three Verification Officers enter the correct polling centre and station codes in the verification programme in their respective laptops;
- Open the special voting ballot box;
- **Note:** For verification, only intact conditional ballot envelopes will be used. The plastic bag of disqualified items must be disregarded.
- Prepare a plastic bag for rejected conditional ballot envelopes and label this 'rejected', and a second bag labeled 'rejected multiple voting'.
- Open a plastic bag labeled for a particular governorate. Carefully take out the conditional ballot envelopes, place them on the table and distribute approximately 10 at a time to each Verification Officer;
- **Note:** the verification of conditional ballot envelopes will take place by governorate if conditional ballot envelopes were cast for more than one governorate in the polling station.

2. Data on the conditional ballot envelope is checked against the voter register

- Verification Officers will take each conditional ballot envelope in turn and search in the voter register database to find the voter, according to procedures outlined in the User Manual for Verification of Conditional Ballot Envelopes for Special Voting.
- If the verification programme confirms that the voter cannot be found and the conditional ballot envelope is to be rejected, the Verification Officer will mark an cross in the top left hand corner of the envelope (X) to indicate that it is rejected.
- If the Verification Officer selects a voter and the verification programme notes recognises that information for this voter has already been selected, it will notify the Verification Officer that this conditional ballot envelope is to be rejected as this is a case of multiple voting. The programme will display which other station of that same polling centre has another conditional ballot envelope for that voter. The Verification Officer will mark the envelope rejected (X) and write on it 'multiple voting' along with the other polling station number on the envelope.
- If data for a voter is correctly found in the database, the conditional ballot envelope is to be accepted and the Verification Officer will mark in the top left hand corner of the envelope a tick (√) to indicate that it is accepted.

3. Handling conditional ballot envelopes and completing Form 150

- When any conditional ballot envelope is rejected because the voter cannot be found in the database, the Verification Officer passes it immediately to the

Verification Team Supervisor who will stamp it 'rejected' and place it into the plastic bag for rejected conditional ballot envelopes;

- When any conditional ballot envelope is rejected because of multiple voting, the Verification Officer passes it immediately to the Verification Team Supervisor, who will stamp it 'rejected' and place it into the plastic bag for labeled 'rejected, multiple voting'.
- Accepted conditional ballot envelopes will be collected together into a box.
- The Verification Team Supervisor redistributes new conditional ballot envelopes to the Verification Officers as necessary;
- When all conditional ballot envelopes cast for a governorate are verified, the Verification Team Supervisor transfers the accepted conditional ballot envelopes into the original transparent plastic bag labeled for that governorate. The bag is then left unsealed and placed in the spare empty ballot box (for temporary storage). The Verification Team Supervisor then opens another bag labeled for another governorate and distributes the conditional ballot envelopes to the Verification Officers for verification as described above.
- The process is repeated until all conditional ballot envelopes for all governorates for that polling station have been verified against the voter register.

4. Retrieval of duplicate conditional ballot envelopes

- With the assistance of the Storage and Archive Team as necessary, the Verification Team will then locate the ballot box(es) of the identified polling station(s) containing additional (multiple) conditional ballot envelopes for a voter. The ballot boxes are opened, the conditional ballot envelope(s) retrieved and compared to the other conditional ballot envelope(s) displaying the same data. The Verification Team Supervisor will stamp 'Rejected' on all confirmed conditional ballot envelopes pertaining to a multiple voter.
- If this relates to polling stations for which the verification process is already complete, the Verification Team Supervisor will correct both copies of Form 150 and write a note on the bottom of the form that the form was corrected following identification of multiple voting.

5. Completing Form 150

At the end of the verification process there will be three categories of conditional ballot envelopes:

- 1. Accepted conditional ballot envelopes packed into their original plastic bags, labeled with the governorate name;*
 - 2. Rejected conditional ballot envelopes for voters who could not be found in the database in a plastic bag labeled 'rejected'*
 - 3. Rejected conditional ballot envelopes for voters with more than one conditional ballot envelope, in a plastic bag labeled 'rejected multiple voting'.*
- Under the supervision of the Verification Team Supervisor, the Verification Officers sort the rejected conditional ballot envelopes by governorate, double count them, and bundle them by governorate with rubber bands. The Team Supervisor records the totals in field 17 ('Conditional Ballot Envelopes Rejected') on Form 150.

- The Verification Officers now double count the accepted conditional ballot envelopes, governorate by governorate, and the Team Supervisor records the totals in field 16 ('Conditional Ballot Envelopes accepted') on Form 150.
- The Verification Team Supervisor calculates the total of all numbers in field 16 and records the total in Field 18.
- The Verification Team Supervisor calculates the total of all numbers in field 17 and records the total in Field 19;
- The Verification Team Supervisor then calculates the total of fields 18 and 19 and deducts from this the number recorded in field 15. This is to check that the total of rejected and accepted conditional ballot envelopes is the same as the total conditional ballot envelopes at the start of verification. The difference should be zero. If the difference is not zero, a mistake has been made. Check the calculation and, if necessary, recount all the categories of conditional ballot envelopes to correct the error.
- Finally, the all Verification Team members will sign the Form 150, and verification for that polling station is complete.

6. *Packing and completion of the process*

- The Verification Team ensures all verified conditional ballot envelopes are replaced in the correct, labeled plastic bag (rejected envelopes in one bag, and accepted envelopes in one bag for each governorate). Write on each bag the total number of envelopes inside.
- All labeled bags are placed back in the original ballot box(es) of the polling station;
- The original copy of Form 150 is removed for the archive, and the photocopy is placed in the ballot box.
- The lid is placed on the ballot box(es), which will remain in the process area until all ballot boxes belonging to the same special voting polling centre have been processed in the same way.

Once verification is complete for all polling stations of a special voting polling centre, the Verification Team places **green tape** around the ballot boxes and tamper evident bags of all polling stations to indicate that they are ready to be batched. All materials and top copies of Form 150 are removed to the Storage and Archive Area.

SECTION 5

PREPARATION OF BATCHES

5.1 What is a batch?

Special voting and absentee ballots are not counted by polling station, but by governorate batch in the Count Centre. Each batch will therefore have ballots for one governorate only, but these will come from a mixture of different absentee and special voting polling stations.

5.2 When does batching take place?

Batching can only take place for polling stations which are already reconciled, and for special voting when the verification process is complete as well.

Batching will therefore not start until 04 February, after the close of the submission period for all complaints relating to both special and absentee polling processes. This will be confirmed to the Count Centre by the IHEC National Office.

The IHEC Department of Electoral Advice and Complaints will provide a list of polling stations requiring investigation. These must be kept in the quarantine area until they have been audited and instruction is received to release ballots for counting or not. Only polling stations cleared by the complaints adjudication process can be batched, according to instructions from the National Office.

5.3 Batching Staff

Each Count Centre will have four Batch Officers who will prepare batches to be counted, under the supervision of the Batch Supervisor.

Additional staff should be made available for separating secrecy envelopes from conditional ballot envelopes if required (see 5.7)

5.4 Preparation for Batching

The Batch Supervisor will determine which polling stations are to be batched together, following information received from the National Office. Instructions will be provided to the Count Centre Manager on how many batches their respective Count Centre can expect, and in what sequence reconciled and verified polling stations should be batched. In determining batches, the following should be observed:

- Where possible, absentee ballots should be mixed with special voting ballots.
- Batches should not consist of more than 1800 ballots, unless instructed otherwise.

The following items, required for batching, should be available in the batching area:

- Empty ballot boxes, at least one for each governorate ballot
- Labels for each governorate ballot box
- Form 151 (Count Centre Batching and Counting Form)
- Notebook for batch log (for Batch Supervisor to record batch numbers)
- Pens.

5.5 Batch Numbering

Each batch will be assigned a unique number, which will be used on all materials and forms relating to that batch.

This number consists of:

- ✓ Code of the governorate of the Count Centre (two digits)
- ✓ Item number for the batch in sequence (two digits – ie the first batch for the Count Centre is 01, the second is 02, the third 03 etc)
- ✓ Code of the governorate of the ballots in that batch.

For example, 14-08-23 would be: in Kirkuk Count Centre (14) the eighth batch of the Count Centre (08) with ballots for Baghdad Governorate Council (23).

5.6 Batching step-by-step

Once the Batch Supervisor, in cooperation with the Count Centre Manager, has determined which polling stations will be sent for batching, the following process will take place for each batch.

Form 151 (Count Centre Batching and Counting Form) will be completed for each batch. This will be completed by the Batch Supervisor.

Remark: It is important to remember that polling stations may have different governorate ballots. The process of mixing ballots from polling station ballot boxes to governorate ballot boxes in many cases will be creating more than one batch at the same time (ie one batch for each governorate ballot).

- Prepare the required number of empty ballot boxes for the batching process.
Note: It may not be known prior to batching how many ballot boxes are needed for each governorate. If additional ballot boxes are needed during the process, a second or third ballot box for a particular governorate may also be prepared, and the ballot boxes will be numbered in sequence (ballot box 1, 2 etc), alongside the governorate ballot name.
- Label each ballot box with the batch code and name of the governorate of the ballots.
- Receive ballot boxes from the storage and archive area (with green tape to indicate polling stations are ready for batching).
- Prepare a Form 151 for each batch, by completing the top section of the form, and record all batch numbers in the batch logbook.
- Open the first polling station ballot box(es). Polling station ballot boxes should be opened one at a time.
- Take out the plastic bags containing either reconciled absentee ballots or verified conditional ballot envelopes labeled with the governorate name of the ballots.
- Check to ensure the governorate name and number of ballots or envelopes is correct, and then place the ballots or envelopes in the corresponding batch ballot box labeled with the name of the governorate ballot.

- Record on Form 151 for that governorate batch:
 - The polling centre and station numbers in fields 4 and 5, and
 - The number of ballots/envelopes in field 6.
- Repeat the above process for the next polling station.

Once a batch for a particular governorate is completed (ie the total ballots for the batch is reached, or there are no more ballots for that governorate in the Count Centre), the total ballots or conditional ballot envelopes in the batch will be calculated by adding items in field 6 and writing the total in field 7.

Note that the batch ballot box may contain a mixture of conditional ballot envelopes (from special voting polling stations) and ballots (from absentee polling stations).

The Supervisor will sign the Form 151 and place it inside the batch ballot box (or in ballot box 1 if more than one is used).

Ballot boxes must remain under staff supervision at all times, if not secured, until delivery to the count table.

5.7 Removal of Conditional Ballot Envelopes

Prior to delivery to the Count Table, all secrecy envelopes must be removed from the conditional ballot envelopes. No personal data should be in the counting area, in order to ensure the secrecy of the voters' choice. Additional staff may be used for this task and the ballot box may be moved to a separate area if necessary.

Staff should ensure they have available:

- Paper cutters (for opening envelopes)
- Empty ballot box for opened and empty conditional ballot envelopes
- Red Pens (for correcting secrecy envelopes if necessary).

Each conditional ballot envelope will be opened and the secrecy envelope removed.

Note: if the governorate for which the voter is casting a ballot as noted on the secrecy envelope does not match the one recorded on the conditional ballot envelope, the governorate on the secrecy envelope is crossed out and the one on the conditional ballot envelope is copied onto the secrecy envelope.

Empty conditional ballots envelopes will be placed in the ballot box for this purpose, which should be labeled 'empty conditional ballot envelopes'. Secrecy envelopes will be replaced into the governorate batch ballot box(es).

Once this is complete, the ballot box containing empty conditional ballot envelopes will be sealed and removed to the storage area.

The governorate batch ballot box is now ready to be counted.

SECTION 6 COUNTING

After receiving the prepared batches for counting, the votes cast for political entities and for their respective candidates will be sorted and counted.

The Storage and Archive staff will deliver the prepared batches for counting to the Count Team.

Every Count Team will consist of up to nine staff: one Supervisor and up to 8 Count Officers staff (depending on the number of ballots to be counted) who will work in pairs of two to

- sort ballots
- double count and read ballots.

Preparation for Counting

The following items are required for counting and should be available in the counting area:

- Form 151 for the batch (part completed during batching)
- Result forms 152 and 153
- Red pens
- Rubber bands
- Post it notes.

Batch Counting step-by-step

The count procedure follows the procedure for counting ballots at regular polling stations.

- » During the counting process, periodically check under the counting table and under the chairs to make sure that no ballots have fallen on the floor.
- » Observers must be able to see the counting process but must not be able to touch the ballots or otherwise interfere with the count.
- » The Count Team Supervisor is responsible for filling in all counting forms.
- » The double count method will be followed in all steps of sorting and counting in order to avoid mistakes.
- » Only red pens will be used on the Count Table until final completion of forms.
- » Count staff must announce to observers and agents each step they are about to undertake, the status of each ballot paper (unstamped, blank etc) and the results.

Opening the ballot box

After receiving the batches that contain absentee voting ballots and the secrecy envelopes, which exists in the boxes, the team will perform the following:

A. Counting Total Ballots Cast After Opening the Ballot Box

- Ballots (absentee ballots and special voting secrecy envelopes) will be counted in groups. Each group consists of 25 ballots and will be placed in an (X) shape.
- Ballots will be given to another Count Officer in order to re-count them. Thus the counting process will be easier as every group contains 25 ballots. If the total is different in the two counts, the ballots will be given to a third Count Officer to check the number. This method will be used in counting ballots after sorting into categories (as explained in section C) and also after sorting valid ballots by political entities and candidates.
- Record the number of ballots in field 8 of Form 151.
- After the ballot boxes for the batch have been opened, the contents emptied on the count table and the verification process completed, the count team will be divided into two teams:
 1. The first team will check the absentee ballots for the governorate, keeping them face down, to make sure ballots inside the box correspond to the correct governorate batch. In case it is found that a ballot does not belong to the governorate for which the team is counting ballots, the ballots will be given to the Count Team Supervisor, who will ensure they are delivered back to the Batch Team.
 2. The second team will first check the secrecy envelopes to ensure they belong to the same governorate, for which the team is counting ballots. In case it is found that the governorate written on the secrecy envelope is not the same as the governorate for which the team is counting ballots, the secrecy envelopes will be given to the Count Team Supervisor, who will ensure they are delivered back to the Batch Team. .
- After finishing the first check, the second check will proceed by opening the secrecy envelopes and comparing the ballot inside with the governorate written on the envelope. In case, the written governorate on the envelope does not refer to the correct governorate, the ballot will be disqualified. The disqualified ballots will be counted and the total number will be recorded in field 9 of the counting section of Form 151, for total number of incorrect ballots.

Note: the empty secrecy envelopes will be placed in a transparent plastic bag labeled with the total number of disqualified ballots and secrecy envelopes and the name of the governorate for which the ballot is cast.

After the two teams have finishing these initial checks, the following procedures will be adopted for the counting process:

B. Sorting the ballots

When sorting ballots, there will be five categories of ballots as follows:

1. Unstamped ballots: when checking the back of the ballots, they do not carry the official ballot stamp, then the voter's vote will not be counted. After finishing

sorting the unstamped ballots from rest, turn the ballots face up, so the voter's mark will be visible.

2. Blank ballots: a ballot paper which does not have any mark is blank.
3. Invalid ballots: an invalid ballot is a ballot which contains an incorrect mark for the voter's choice. (See Section on determining ballot validity.)
4. Valid ballots: ballot that have correct mark for an entity, or an entity and candidate of that entity.
5. Ballots requiring adjudication: the mark is not clear or identified, the mark must be identified as either valid or invalid by the Station Manager, and the ballot placed in either the valid or invalid group.

Note: if any ballots require adjudication, follow these steps:

- » Thoroughly review the rules and examples for valid and invalid ballots.
- » The Station Manager will announce her/his decision about whether the ballot is valid or invalid.
- » If any member of the polling station staff objects to the Station Manager's decision, there will be a vote of the team members. If the votes are even, the Station Manager's decision will be implemented.
- » If it has been decided that the ballot has a valid mark, place it into the stack of valid ballots.
- » If it has been decided that the ballot does not have a valid mark, place it onto a stack of invalid ballots.

C. Sorting Ballots and Recording on Form 151

Continue the evaluation process for all ballots and sort them into the following groups:

- Unstamped – count and record in field 10 of Form 151, and place them in the special envelope for unstamped and invalid ballots.
- Blank – count and record in field 11 of Form 151, and place them in the special envelope for blank ballots.
- Invalid – count and record in field 12 of Form 151, and place them in the special envelope for unstamped and invalid ballots
- Valid – count and record in field 13 of Form 151.
- Calculate the total number of ballots above (unstamped (10) + blank (11) + invalid (12) + valid (13)) and write the total number in field 14 of Form 151.
- Compare the total number of ballots written in field 14 with the total number of ballots inside the ballot box written in field 8 and write the difference in number in field 15 of Form 151.

If there is any difference, then recount the ballots in each group (unstamped, blank, invalid and valid) in order to correct any mistakes.

D. Sorting and Counting of Valid Ballots

1. Sorting and Counting by Political Entity and Completing Form 152 Total Votes for Political Entities

- Ballots will be sorted according to political entities only, without considering the candidate mark.
- The ballots of each political entity will be placed separately, and a special post-it note placed at the head of the pile for each political entity, with the name and number of that political entity on it.
- Count the ballots of each political entity in sequence based on the sequence of political entities on Form 152 and write the total votes for each political entity on Form 152 (Total Votes for Political Entities) and on the post-it notes for each entity.
- After finishing counting the ballots for each political entity, the total number for all entities will be written down in the special field on Form 152.
- The total number of political entity votes on Form 152 will be compared with the number of valid ballots as recorded in field 13 of Form 151. If there is a difference between the two fields, a mistake has been made in the counting, recording or calculation of political entity votes. Recheck until the mistake is found and corrected.

2. Sorting and Counting by Candidate and Completing Form 153 Total Votes for Candidates

Remark: this process will group ballots into stacks for each candidate and another stack for political entity only votes. A political entity only vote is a vote to the political entity only or a vote to a political entity where the mark of the candidate is invalid, so the vote will be counted only for the political entity.

- Write down the political entity number and name and number of votes received on the Form 153 as it is recorded on Form 152.

Remark: Only political entities which received votes need to be included on Form 153, in the same order as they appear on form 152.

- Take the stack of ballots for the first political entity and sort by candidate.
- Group into stacks by candidate and label each stack with a post-it note with the name and number of the candidate, along with the number of votes gained by that candidate.
- Create an additional stack of ballots with political entity only votes and label this with a post-it 'political entity only', with the number of votes for the political entity only.
- Count the ballots of each candidate in turn and record the number of votes for each candidate in the relevant field under the candidate's number on Form 153.

- Calculate the total votes for all candidates of that political entity and write this in field 3 of Form 153.
- Count the ballots for political entity only votes for that political entity and write the number in field 4 of Form 153.
- Calculate the total of field 3 + field 4 and write the total in field 5. The total number should equal the same number as in field 1. If it does not, a mistake has been made in the counting, recording or calculation of candidate votes. Recheck the ballots of the political entity until the mistake is found and corrected.
- Repeat the steps above for each political entity and its candidates in turn.
- After completing the counting of votes for all the political entities and their candidates, record the number of copies used of Form 153 in the relevant box at the bottom of the form.

Note: After completing counting ballots for each political entity, and recording this on Form 153, roll together the ballot papers, secure them with an elastic band and place them in the ballot box, with the post-it note with the name and number of the political entity and the votes it received placed under the elastic band.

VALIDITY OF BALLOTS AND VOTES

A. Adjudicating Ballot Marks

In adjudicating ballot marking, the principle is that a vote is considered valid if the intention of the voter is clear. (See below on determining valid and invalid votes.)

B. Ballot Validity

For a ballot to be valid:

- i. It must be the official ballot supplied by the IHEC and officially issued at the polling station, stamped with the official IHEC ballot stamp.
- ii. If the ballot is torn, all political entity and candidate boxes used for marking a voter's choice must remain intact, as well as the name of the governorate.
- iii. The political entity vote must be valid. The ballot as a whole is invalid if the political entity vote is not clear.

C. Candidate Vote Validity

Once it is determined that the political entity vote is valid (and therefore the ballot is valid), the candidate vote may also be counted if a mark is also made for a candidate number and this mark is considered valid. If the candidate vote is considered invalid, then the ballot will be counted as a vote for the political entity only.

The following table is used to determine how to count the vote.

Item	Ballot Marks	Ballot Validity	How to Count the Vote	Comments
1	Unclear political entity vote	Ballot invalid	Vote not counted	
2	No political entity vote; valid candidate vote	Ballot invalid	Vote not counted	
3	Valid political entity vote; no candidate vote	Ballot valid	Vote counts for political entity only	
4	Valid political entity vote; unclear unclear candidate vote	Ballot valid	Invalid candidate vote. Vote counts for political entity only	
5	Valid political entity vote; candidate number outside total number of candidates on political entity list	Ballot valid	Invalid candidate vote. Vote counts for political entity only.	Form 153 to be completed according to the ballot, and correction made at data entry.
6	Valid political entity vote; candidate number written in political entity box on right hand side of ballot	Ballot valid	Voter's intent clear. Vote counts for both political entity and candidate	
7	Valid political entity vote; candidate box not marked, but candidate name from the political entity list is written on the ballot	Ballot valid	No reference to candidate number. Vote counts for political entity only.	

Determining Valid and Invalid Votes

The following outlines how to determine whether a vote is valid or invalid.

❖ The intent of the voter is clear and a vote will be therefore be considered valid when:

- The ballot is marked with any mark within the box next to the name of only one choice.
- The voter's choice is indicated clearly with a mark other than a mark inside the box.
- A mark made in a box touches other boxes or extends also outside the box, as long as this indicates the voter's clear choice.
- In addition to a clear mark indicating the voter's choice, the voter has written or drawn something on the ballot.
- The voter has clearly marked a single choice, but has also crossed out or otherwise scribbled over the name(s) of other political entities/candidates without making a mark for any of them.
- The ballot is marred, smudged or soiled but the voter's choice remains clear.

❖ The intent of the voter is not clear and a vote will therefore be considered invalid when:

- The voter has made marks indicating more than one choice.
- The ballot has been written upon, but no clear mark has been made to indicate the voter has made a choice.
- A single mark is placed so that it covers two names or boxes, thereby not indicating a clear single choice.
- A mark indicating a choice has been altered, erased or crossed out, and another choice has been marked. If the voter makes a mistake in marking the ballot, this ballot should be spoiled and another ballot issued to the voter by the Ballot Issuer.
- The voter's mark is placed over the name of a political entity/candidate in a manner which makes it unclear as to whether the voter is intending to cross out or to indicate a choice for that political entity/candidate.

3. Finalizing the Counting Process

- After completing the Count Centre Results Forms 152 and 153, the Count Team Supervisor will record the numbers of the seals that will be used to seal the counted Batch ballot box(es) on Form 151. The Count Team now seals the ballot boxes containing all ballots.
- Five count staff will sign all forms in the relevant signature section.
- Observers and agents will be invited to sign the back of Forms 152 and 153 if they wish and record the information.

4. Packing and storage of the material

- The count staff will put yellow tape on the counted ballot boxes and the tamper evident bag which will contain the Count Centre counting and results forms 151, 152 and 153.
- The Supervisor takes one photocopy of each of the completed forms and the count team countersigns the copies.
- The Supervisor places the original copies of completed Count Centre Forms 151, 152 and 153 in an A3-sized tamper evident bag and labels it with a sticker for the National Office, on which should be written the following information: Count Centre name, batch number and forms contained inside. This will then be delivered to the storage and archive area for onward delivery to the Tally Centre in Baghdad.
- The second copies will be placed in a folder for filing in the archive.
- In coordination with Storage and Archive Staff, ballot boxes containing the batch of counted ballots and the A3 forms tamper evident bag will be delivered to the storage and archive area, along with other copies of the forms.

Counting of Regular Polling Stations

There will likely be cases of ballots of regular polling stations which require counting, after materials for the polling station which were quarantined for investigation are then cleared for counting after audit. All regular polling stations, whether previously counted or not, will go through all counting processes if cleared for counting after audit.

In these cases, polling station forms 141, 142 and 143 will be used and the same process will be followed as for counting in regular stations.

Reconciliation will take place at audit, and the ballot box for the polling station will arrive in the count area with a completed Form 141 (Polling Station Reconciliation Form).

Count staff will undertake all sorting and counting steps as described in B-D.

- If the ballots for the polling station have not been previously counted, the Count Team Supervisor will complete Forms 142 and 143, noting on the Form 'completed at the Count Centre'.
- If the ballots for the polling station have been previously counted, the Count Team Supervisor will correct the existing Forms 142 and 143 and then copy the information onto new forms, noting on the forms 'Counted in the Count Centre).
- All top copies will together be placed in an A3 tamper evident bag, labeled (For the National Office), with the polling station number and listing types of forms inside.
- All other copies of forms will be delivered to the archive for filing.

SECTION 7

AUDIT

Audit is the process of investigation of the materials and forms of a polling station, where a problem has been identified. This is with the aim of identifying the problem, and resolving this if possible.

The Count Centre will perform audits of

- all polling stations where a discrepancy above tolerance was detected in the polling station, Tally Centre and/or Count Centre;
- all polling stations that were subject of one or more complaints, and for which an audit was instructed after an investigation;
- all polling stations for which irregularities were detected during their intake in the Count Centre or the GEO Warehouse.

The audit will consist of a systematic review of the material and might include reconciliation and count activities.

Provided the audit resolves the initial problem of a particular polling station, it will subsequently be included into a Batch and/or counted and/or included in the results. If the polling station was Regular, its Count Centre Results Forms will eventually have to be transferred to the Tally Centre for results data entry.

Audit activities will be performed by Audit Team(s) of two staff each. Additional staff may be available to count ballots for reconciliation purposes, if required. In addition, an Audit Supervisor will monitor all activities undertaken by the Audit Team(s).

Audit processes will be conducted in accordance with separate audit guidelines.

Audits will be conducted in close coordination with the Audit Helpdesk at the National Office.

5. COMPLAINTS

As part of the regular complaints process which will be conducted in accordance with the IHEC regulation and procedures, any accredited political entity agent has the right to submit a complaint related to the GEO Count Centre operation at the IHEC governorate Count Centre, GEO or National Office. Observers can submit reports to their official authorities but cannot however submit formal complaints in the GEO Count Centre, GEO or National Office.

Any political entity agent wishing to file a complaint to the IHEC pertaining to anything related to the Count Centre must complete a Complaint Form 110. The Complaint Form may be submitted to the Count Centre, the GEO or the IHEC National Office in Baghdad.

How to file a complaint

The complainant can obtain a Complaint Form 110 and its A5 complaint form envelope from the designated official at the GEO Count Centre, or from the GEO or National Office.

The Complaint Form consists of four carbonated copies in different colours. The form must include the following:

- Name, address and contact information of the complainant.
- Name and contact information of the person alleged to have committed a violation (if available).
- Details of the alleged violation, including date, time, place and circumstances.
- Name and contact information of any witnesses of the violation (if available).
- Any relevant document or other evidence supporting the complaint.
- Signature of the complainant.

The person wishing to file a complaint must be informed of the requirements for submission by the designated official.

Complaints are confidential. The complainant will fill out the Complaint Form, date and sign it, keep the last copy and insert the other three copies into the Complaints Envelope (size A5) along with any other relevant documentary evidence (if available). The complainant seals the envelope and then submits it to the designated official in the GEO Count Centre, the GEO or the IHEC National Office. The designated official will receive the submitted complaint, stamp, date and sign the envelope across the seal.

Note: the complainant, if desired, may ask the GEO Count Centre Manager to write add his/her comments on the Complaint Form 110.

A complaint must be submitted within three days of the time and date of the alleged violation.

On a daily basis, the Count Centre Manager will log all submitted complaints envelopes (A5) into the Count Centre Journal.

Then all submitted complaint envelopes will be placed into an A4-size envelope labeled 'Complaints', on which will be recorded:

- Name and code of the GEO Count Centre
- Number of A5 complaints envelopes contained inside
- The date.

The A4 Complaint Envelope will then be transferred to the GEO as soon as possible.

Annex – Tolerance Level

The IHEC has agreed 4% as the tolerance level for acceptable discrepancy at reconciliation.

Use the relevant field in the reconciliation form, total ballots inside the box, in order to determine the maximum number of ballots acceptable as a discrepancy in the polling station.

When you have determined the maximum level of discrepancy, check whether your two areas of reconciliation are within or outside this.

Number of ballots found inside the ballot box	Maximum discrepancy
1 - 25	1
26 - 50	2
51 - 75	3
76 - 100	4
101 - 125	5
126 - 150	6
151 - 175	7
176 - 200	8
201 - 225	9
226 - 250	10
251 - 275	11
276 - 300	12
301 - 325	13
326 - 350	14
351 - 375	15
376 - 400	16
400 – 425	17
426 – 450	18
451 – 475	19
476 – 500	20